

JOEL'S BABY

OR  
FARMHAND

Part 1: THE STORY OF JOEL

1. JOEL and SHIRLEY are making love in a dark room. SHIRLEY is black and JOEL is white, and both are seventeen.
2. SHIRLEY is going through labor violently in a bright delivery room that is in the Atboro Memorial Hospital. A DOCTOR and a NURSE, both very tense, help. As EDWARD, a white baby, begins to emerge from (black) SHIRLEY sounds in the room fade out.
3. JOEL sits on a train that is crowded, noisy, and immobile, his eyes resting on the train platform. The train begins moving, gradually drowning out the talking of the passengers.
4. The wheels of the train, seen close up. Their sound is extremely loud.
5. THE CREDITS. EDWARD, the newborn white baby, is followed step by step through the rapid procedures of the delivery room. Then, down the hall and into the maternity ward.
6. Back in the delivery room the DOCTOR and the NURSE are no longer wearing their hospital masks. The DOCTOR slowly covers SHIRLEY's face and body with a blanket, sadly looking at her corpse.

DOCTOR

Who do I have to tell?

NURSE

No one.

The DOCTOR looks at the NURSE, who meets his eyes and then looks down, sadly.

DOCTOR

There's no one in the waiting room? Then how did she get here? She came by herself?

The sound of the train is faintly heard.

7. EDWARD asleep in his crib in the maternity ward. The sound of the train is much louder.

8. The wheels of the train seen close up again, and their sound is again extremely loud.
9. JOEL sleeps peacefully in his seat on the train as lush, rural scenery goes by. The train is mostly empty now.
10. MONTAGE and THEME MUSIC (Saxophone). JOEL, carrying a suitcase, leaves the train, walks through a small rural town, walks down various country roads and hitchhikes the few times a car or truck goes by. During a beautiful sunset JOEL is picked up by a new, expensive car. CATHY, a pretty seventeen year old, drives, with HARRY, a middle-aged man, next to her and JOEL in the back seat behind CATHY. JOEL and CATHY frequently look at eachother in the rear-view mirror. JOEL and HARRY do most of the talking, and are in a good rhythm with eachother. JOEL and CATHY are also in a good rhythm with eachother. JOEL is also somewhat in rhythm with the Theme Music. They arrive at a big farm and mansion. In daylight, JOEL is in farm clothes, sweating and crouching in a vast farm field picking pea pods. In view are a road, woods, a barn, the farm mansion, and other men, black and white, spread across the field also picking pea pods. It is hot and sunny. Sleeves are rolled up, shirts unbuttoned.
11. THEME MUSIC. CATHY trots a horse through a path in the woods, passing flowers, birds, trees and streams.
12. THEME MUSIC. CATHY gallops across the vast farm field, steering by the men and then coming to a stop when she reaches JOEL. JOEL stops picking pea pods and smiles at CATHY. CATHY smiles back. THEME MUSIC stops.

JOEL  
If your father saw  
what you just did...

CATHY  
Yea?

JOEL  
He'd be so mad at you.

CATHY  
I don't think so. Boy,  
it sure is hot.

JOEL starts picking pea pods again. They stop smiling.

JOEL  
Trampling pea pods  
like that.

CATHY  
Aren't you hot, Joel?

12.(cont'd.) CATHY starts stroking the back of her horse's neck.

JOEL

Oh, I reckon.

CATHY

"Reckon"? You "reckon"?  
I thought you said that  
you're from Brooklyn.

JOEL stops picking pea pods again and watches CATHY's hand as it strokes the back of her horse's neck.

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JOEL

Yea, I'm from Brooklyn.

CATHY

So don't talk like that.  
Shew, I am really hot.

CATHY unfastens four of the buttons of her shirt. They smile again.

JOEL

(Pause) You really must be.  
You... well, you really  
must be.

CATHY

(Pause) Know what we  
should do?

13. A beautiful lake surrounded by woods. CATHY is swimming naked underwater.

CATHY (v.o.)

There's a lake in the  
woods...

14. Cathy's HORSE, tied to a tree.

15. JOEL, by the lake, is watching Cathy swimming. He still smiles and is lying naked on a blanket under a tree. Alongside of him are two towels and his and Cathy's clothes. He gradually stops smiling, closes his eyes, and sleeps peacefully.

16. CATHY is sitting next to JOEL drying her wet hair and letting the sun dry her wet body. JOEL opens his eyes, which immediately melt into CATHY's.

CATHY

(Pause) You should  
have told me you'd  
never been swimming.

JOEL

That's okay. I needed  
the rest.



16.(cont'd.)

CATHY

Did you fall asleep?

JOEL

Yea.

CATHY

You'll go in the water eventually, won't you?

JOEL

Yea.

JOEL takes away Cathy's towel and pulls CATHY willingly towards him. They kiss.

17. EDWARD still sleeping in his crib in the maternity ward. Assorted people walk by the maternity ward, some glancing at the babies, others not.

18. JOEL sits by the side of the lake while CATHY is in the lake, treading water.

CATHY

That isn't really true, is it?

JOEL

Yes.

CATHY

And that's why you left Brooklyn? (Pause) What color is it? I mean the baby. Black or white? Or both?

JOEL

Rainbow colored! I don't know. I left before it was born.

CATHY

Then you should go back.

JOEL

Oh, so you're trying to get rid of me.

CATHY

No, but it's what you should do.



- 18.(cont'd.) CATHY goes underwater and swims towards JOEL. CATHY climbs out of the water and into his arms.
19. In a lower middle class Brooklyn apartment living room, a telephone continuously rings unanswered. MAX, a middle-aged man in Saturday clothes, sits watching a very loud T.V., oblivious to the telephone. On top of the T.V. set is a picture turned upside down of Joel. Every time canned laughter from the television stops, MAX laughs, as if he is just a slight bit out of rhythm with the show. When there is a commercial MAX turns down the volume so that it isn't so loud and goes to the telephone. He continues to watch the television.

MAX  
Hello?

MISS JOHNSON  
Hello, my name is Miss  
Johnson. May I please  
speak with Mr. Joel  
Solomon?

MAX becomes tense. He seems to be paying more attention to the T.V. than to Miss Johnson.

MISS JOHNSON  
(Pause) Hello? I'd like  
to speak with Joel  
Solomon please?

MAX  
Not here.

MISS JOHNSON  
Could you tell me when  
he's expected?

MAX  
Joel no longer lives here.

MISS JOHNSON  
Well in that case maybe  
you can help me. You see,  
I'm a social worker at  
the Atboro Memorial  
Hospital. Are you Joel's  
father?

MAX  
Sorry lady. The commercial's  
over. I have to go now.

MISS JOHNSON  
You don't know the  
reason I called!

19.(cont'd.)

MAX

You called to speak to my son. But the commercial's over and I have to go. Sorry.

MISS JOHNSON

Mr. Solomon, you have a grandson.

MAX looks away from the television screen.

MAX

(Pause) You're wrong.

MISS JOHNSON

(Pause) My name is Miss Johnson. I'm a social worker at the Atboro Memorial Hospital.

MAX looks at the television screen again.

MAX

Don't say I have a grandson.

MISS JOHNSON

Well I think I understand how you feel, but, please...

MAX

I don't want you to call here again.

MISS JOHNSON

How can I get in touch with Joel?

MAX

No. There is no way.

MISS JOHNSON

Well if he returns would you please have him contact me? I'm sure Joel would like to know he has a son. As it stands now his son is an orphan. I'll give you my number. It's-

MAX

What about the colored girl? Why are you calling instead of her?

19.(cont'd.)

MISS JOHNSON  
Shirley Williams died  
while giving birth.

MAX looks away from the television screen again. There is a long pause.

MISS JOHNSON  
My number is 742-0116.  
Please have Joel contact  
me if he returns. Thank  
you.

MAX does not take down the number. He hangs up the phone and returns to the television, turning the volume up loud again. When there is canned laughter MAX does not follow it with his laughter anymore.

20. After a while a door is heard opening and closing.

MAX  
That you, Anna?

ANNA, a middle-aged woman, wheels a cart with two bags of groceries into the kitchen and begins putting them away. They have to shout to be heard above the television.

ANNA  
Who else could it be? A  
burglar? What burglar  
would want to come here?  
Tell me!

MAX  
(Smiling) Plenty of burglars!

ANNA  
Sure! Don't talk to me!

MAX  
So she's angry at me because  
we're unpopular with burglars!

ANNA  
Do you want to know why I'm  
angry at you? I'm angry at  
you... because you sit there!

MAX  
Here we go! Five days a week  
isn't good enough? I should  
work on the Sabbath?

ANNA  
Suddenly he's a Rabbi! Yes



20.(cont'd.)

ANNA (cont'd.)

of course, he watches T.V.  
on Saturday to please God!  
Is that why you watch T.V.?

MAX

Shush!! I'm missing all the  
jokes!!

ANNA

I'll shush! He says "Shush",  
so I shush! I spend the day  
shopping for food, exhausting  
myself, and when I come home  
it's "Shush"!

There is very prolonged canned laughter.

MAX

(Whispering to himself)  
I just missed the best joke  
of the show.

21. Inside the farm mansion, in an expensive, fancy dining room,  
sit JOEL, CATHY, HARRY, and MARY, Harry's wife, eating. The  
pots, silverware, and dishes all look very expensive. Dramatic  
classical music plays in the background on a very expensive  
sound system.

JOEL

Sir, I want to tell you how  
truly grateful I am to be  
invited to sit at the dinner  
table here with you and all  
of your wonderful family.

HARRY

My wonderful family...  
Ha-Ha-Ha! Well that's cause  
we like you! Yes sir, you're  
a fine boy, Joel. Where'd  
you say you were from?

JOEL

I'm from Brooklyn.

HARRY

Brooklyn. Never heard of  
Brooklyn. Ha-Ha! Well...  
you are a fine young lad,  
Joel.

CATHY

(Pause) Joel got a colored  
girl pregnant and that's  
the reason he left home.

21.(cont'd.) JOEL turns red.

HARRY

Hmmm... He did? ...Well...  
that sure is something I  
never did. Isn't that  
right, Ma?

MARY

Not that I know of, anyway.

JOEL

(Pause) It isn't that I  
meant to get her pregnant.  
What I mean is, uh...

HARRY

Now you don't have to  
apologize, Joel. Should  
be proud you got a colored  
girl pregnant. (Pause)  
That makes you somebody's  
Daddy, right? Well, that's  
good then!

JOEL

I suppose...

CATHY

Well, I told him he should  
go back and find out what  
happened. He doesn't even  
know if it's a boy or a girl.

HARRY

Go back? Nah! Don't pay  
attention to her Joel. Girl  
don't know what she's talking  
about.

CATHY

Daddy...

HARRY

Don't listen to that girl.  
Got to live your own life.

JOEL

I'll try to follow your  
advice, sir. But I must say,  
you certainly have a fine  
daughter.

21.(cont'd.)

HARRY

Ha-Ha-Ha! Yes sir, I do.  
Pass me the peas, Ma?

MARY

Here they come, Pa.

CATHY

That poor little baby...

JOEL and HARRY smile at eachother.

22. In the farm mansion in an expensive living room, CATHY lounges on a sofa reading a Gothic novel. She marks her place and removes from the book a scrap of paper on which the names "Max and Anna Solomon" are scribbled. She studies it. She picks up a telephone receiver spontaneously, as if she heard it ring. She dials Information and asks for the Brooklyn area code.

OPERATOR

Brooklyn? You mean  
Brooklyn, New York?

CATHY

Oh I don't know. I  
suppose so.

Then CATHY dials Information in Brooklyn, finds out the number of Joel's parents, and then dials that number.

MAX

Hello?

CATHY

Hello, is this Max  
Solomon?

MAX

Yes?

CATHY

You don't know me but  
my name is Cathy. And,  
the reason I'm calling  
you is because, I know  
that your son Joel ran  
away from home, and, I  
can tell you where he is.

MAX

Joel ran away because he  
got a colored girl pregnant!

CATHY

(Smiling) Yes, I know.



22.(cont'd.)

MAX

Don't talk to me about Joel! And how did you get this number? Joel didn't give you this number!

CATHY

But I - I got it from Information. But don't you want to know where Joel is? He's living with us on a farm. The address is-

MAX

Don't you ever call here again! Understand? Never!!

MAX furiously slams down the phone. CATHY is confused.

23. CATHY rides her horse across the field to where JOEL is picking pea pods.

JOEL

(Smiling) There she goes, trampling pea pods again...

CATHY

Guess what?

JOEL resumes picking pea pods, still smiling.

JOEL

You shouldn't trample pea pods.

CATHY

I just called your father.

JOEL stops smiling and turns to CATHY sharply.

JOEL

What?

CATHY

I called your father up.

JOEL

You don't know the phone number!

CATHY

But I... used Information.

23.(cont'd.)

JOEL  
I'll kill you!!

CATHY  
Don't get so excited!  
I just wanted to tell  
him where you are.

JOEL starts picking pea pods again, savagely. CATHY watches.  
There is a long pause.

CATHY  
Joel, I don't think it's  
right the way you just  
burnt all your bridges  
behind you.

JOEL stops picking pea pods and turns to CATHY sharply again.

JOEL  
You're out of your  
mind! You have no  
right involving  
yourself... in this...

CATHY  
He hung up before I  
could even give him  
our address.

JOEL  
Never do that again.  
Cathy! You have no idea  
what it is you're doing.

CATHY  
Your father said pretty  
much the same thing.

JOEL  
Never!

CATHY  
Well it seems to me that  
people from Brooklyn get  
excited over nothing.

JOEL  
Sure! That's right! We  
get excited over nothing!

JOEL starts picking pea pods again, savagely. CATHY watches.

23.(cont'd.)

CATHY

(Pause) Then forget the whole thing. Go swimming?  
(Smiling) You didn't even go in the water the other time.

JOEL picks the pea pods less savagely.

JOEL

Cathy, I can't go swimming with you now. I have to work.

CATHY

But Daddy doesn't mind.

JOEL

Well I do. I can't get paid for work and then just go swimming with you. It's irresponsible. I'd like to, but...

CATHY

(No longer smiling) You won't go swimming because you're mad at me.

JOEL

I am mad that you called Brooklyn.

CATHY

And that's why you won't go swimming.

JOEL stops picking pea pods again and turns to CATHY.

JOEL

I already told you why I won't go swimming: It's irresponsible.

CATHY

You aren't responsible. Getting someone pregnant, leaving her there to raise the kid by herself!

JOEL

Here we go again... You don't know the real situation. You just think you know the way things work in Brooklyn.



- 23.(cont'd.) CATHY abruptly gallops away on her horse. JOEL watches her for a few moments.
24. EDWARD still sleeping, but in a different crib. Despite closed eyes, there is tension on his face.
25. WILLIAM and BARBARA SMITH, a very, very wealthy looking, middle-aged couple, sit in an adoption agency opposite the desk of MRS. DELORES, a middle-aged woman. WILLIAM and BARBARA each sign the same set of papers. MRS. DELORES collects the papers together in a businesslike way. All three are beaming.

MRS. DELORES

Everyone here is certainly pleased that you decided to adopt little - Edward? Is that what you're naming him?

WILLIAM

Yes, that's what we're naming him alright, alright. Ha-Ha-Ha! Great name, isn't it?

MRS. DELORES

Yes, it certainly is. And we're sure that you two will make excellent parents.

MRS. DELORES makes ready to stand up.

WILLIAM

How about a little drink to celebrate?

MRS. DELORES

Ah, well no, we're really not supposed to, uh...

WILLIAM

Oh, come on! Barbara, let's see that bottle.

MRS. DELORES forgets about standing up.

BARBARA

Are you sure, honey?

MRS. DELORES

Really, Mr. Smith, drinking in the morning.

25.(cont'd.) WILLIAM takes his wife's pocketbook and pulls out a bottle of very expensive champagne and three paper cups.

MRS. DELORES

Aren't you prepared, ha-ha!

WILLIAM pops the bottle open and pours the cups.

WILLIAM

To Edward...

MRS. DELORES

You know, I'm terribly sorry that his records aren't at my disposal. I'm sure there must be things you'd both like to ask me...

WILLIAM

Not me.

WILLIAM finishes his cup of champagne and pours himself another.

MRS. DELORES

But really, this sort of thing should never happen. It's those people at the hospital: They don't take their jobs seriously enough. We might get his records in the mail tomorrow or maybe, not for another month. Well, this will be the last time, because I'm going to see to it that whoever is responsible for this loses his or her job.

BARBARA

Are you talking about the hospital records?

MRS. DELORES

Yes, of course. We should always have the records here before a baby is adopted.

BARBARA

Oh, now don't you worry yourself. Edward's a fine little baby.

25.(cont'd.)

MRS. DELORES

It isn't fair to you. But I'll see to it that something's done, because this can't keep happening in the future.

WILLIAM

Well I don't think we'll be adopting any more after this.

BARBARA

Yes, one's enough for us.

MRS. DELORES

Well, it just isn't fair, and that's all there is to it.

WILLIAM

When I think of those big eyes. Have you ever seen such big eyes?

BARBARA

Never in my whole life!

MRS. DELORES

Oh yes, I have. We had a baby here several weeks ago with eyes much bigger.

BARBARA

Oh.

WILLIAM

And those tiny hands! Such tiny hands!

MRS. DELORES

Don't I just love listening to parents talking about their children! You love him already, I can tell.

BARBARA

From the moment we saw him.

WILLIAM

It's amazing too, cause he's the only baby you've got, uh, that isn't a nigger.



25.(cont'd.)

MRS. DELORES  
What???

BARBARA  
What William means is  
that Edward is your  
last white baby.

MRS. DELORES  
I see?

BARBARA  
Yes. And, well, we came  
to adopt a white baby.

WILLIAM  
You didn't expect us  
to adopt a nigger?

MRS. DELORES  
(Furiously) Please, I  
would appreciate it  
if you could refrain  
from using racist slurs  
when referring to our  
other babies here.

WILLIAM  
You know as well as us  
that they're all niggers.  
Not that I'm surprised  
to find you have so  
many. It's just like  
niggers, to make babies  
and then, well just  
dump them on an adoption  
agency.

MRS. DELORES  
This is absurd...

WILLIAM  
I just feel sorry for  
poor little Edward.  
Lucky for him we're  
taking him out of here  
and away from them.

MRS. DELORES  
Mr. Smith, I have heard  
enough of this. And as  
a matter of fact it is  
not too late for me to  
prevent you from adopting  
Edward.

25.(cont'd.)

BARBARA

He's not usually like this. He's only talking this way because, uh, because he's excited over being a father. Please...

MRS. DELORES

I'm very sorry but at this moment I am ready to, I am ready to...

BARBARA

Please Mrs. Delores...

WILLIAM

I suppose she'd like it better if we left him here.

MRS. DELORES

There are plenty of people besides yourself interested in being adoptive parents.

BARBARA

He's only behaving this way because he's so excited over being a father, and also he's... drunk. We love Edward so much, Mrs. Delores, please don't...

MRS. DELORES

I'm very, very sorry...

BARBARA

No! William!

WILLIAM

What?

BARBARA

William! Tell her that you're sorry!

WILLIAM

Well...

BARBARA

Please!!

25.(cont'd.)

WILLIAM

(Pause) Oh... okay. Mrs. Delores, if I... Mrs. Delores, I'm terribly sorry if I said anything wrong or, anything, uh...

MRS. DELORES

Well...

WILLIAM

...improper...

BARBARA

It's the champagne.

WILLIAM

Barbara's right. I never meant to, uh...

MRS. DELORES

Okay!!

BARBARA hastily packs the champagne bottle back up, leaving the cups on the desk. The three rise, and WILLIAM and BARBARA shake hands with MRS. DELORES.

WILLIAM

Thank you very much.

MRS. DELORES

(Stiffly) Thank you.

WILLIAM and BARBARA leave the office. MRS. DELORES sits back down. She props her head up with her hands, faces downward, closes her eyes, and shakes her head.

26. MONTAGE and THEME MUSIC. Edward's records, which show signs of sloppy treatment, such as coffee stains and telephone messages scribbled in, are put in a manilla envelope that is then stamped, addressed, and sealed. On Mrs. Delores's desk, the same envelope is opened and the records are removed. Her finger follows the records word by word, line by line. Her finger stops at the point in the records where it is revealed that Edward's real mother was black. On MRS. DELORES's face is deep shock. She sweeps the records aside and holds her downcast head in her hands. She suddenly goes to the files and removes the one on William and Barbara. She returns to her desk, finds their telephone number, and very slowly dials it, dialing slower and slower as she goes along. She hangs up before dialing the last digit. EDWARD is seen lying in a different crib, his eyes open.

27. MONTAGE and THEME MUSIC. CATHY, atop her horse, is facing an old, black FARMER, in the field where she was previously talking with

- 27.(cont'd.) Joel. CATHY is crying. Joel is nowhere in sight. The old, black FARMER looks at CATHY sympathetically. CATHY gallops away, and makes her horse gallop faster and faster, into the woods, and then through the woods. CATHY sits crying facing the lake.
28. JOEL is hitchhiking on a country road.
29. CATHY, HARRY, and MARY sit in the expensive dining room in the farm mansion, eating. CATHY is grim. Classical music is heard in the background on the very expensive sound system.

HARRY

Cathy, you'll have to invite that Joel from Brooklyn to have dinner with us again.

CATHY

I can't invite him for dinner anymore because he left.

HARRY

(Pause) You're kidding...

CATHY

I was looking for him and one of the farmers told me that Joel said, to tell you, that he quits.

HARRY

He didn't even ask for his wages! Now why do you suppose he was in such a hurry?

CATHY

I'd like to be excused now.

CATHY leaves.

HARRY

He probably went back to Brooklyn.

MARY

Yea, probably...

HARRY and MARY look at each other sadly.

30. EIGHT YEARS LATER..... Funeral for William Smith. Among the people gathered are an eight year old EDWARD, and BARBARA, who is also eight years older. Everyone there looks very, very wealthy. The MINISTER eulogizes monotonously. Suddenly EDWARD starts laughing.



30.(cont'd.)

EDWARD

He wasn't even my  
real father!

EDWARD laughs. A MAN standing behind EDWARD puts his hands on EDWARD's shoulders. EDWARD turns around sharply and faces the MAN.

EDWARD

He wasn't my real  
father. He adopted me.

Suddenly EDWARD is cold and serious, and looks the MAN straight in the eyes. EDWARD turns back around and quietly listens to the rest of the eulogy.

31. MONTAGE and THEME MUSIC. EDWARD and BARBARA enter a limosine with several others. The limosine rides across a suburban town and delivers EDWARD and BARBARA to a lavish estate.
32. THEME MUSIC. CATHY, eight years older, sits alone in the expensive living room of the farm mansion, sewing. The curtains are drawn, though a little daylight peaks in. One dim light is on.
33. THEME MUSIC. Walking towards the farm mansion with a bottle of whiskey in his hand is a hardly recognizable JOEL, with long scraggly hair, a beard, and dirty, tattered clothes.
34. JOEL rings the doorbell, whiskey bottle still in hand. CATHY answers it.

CATHY

Yes, can I help you?

JOEL

(Pause) Don't you  
recognize me?

CATHY

(Pause) Oh my God!

CATHY hugs JOEL tightly and cries while JOEL smiles. CATHY closes her eyes. After a while CATHY's expression turns cold. She steps back, with traces of tears remaining.

CATHY

(Sharply) Why are you here?

JOEL

I'm back! I - to work for  
your father again!

34.(cont'd.) CATHY studies JOEL. JOEL smiles, though he is upset by CATHY's distance.

CATHY  
Where's your wife,  
and your child?

JOEL  
What?

CATHY  
You went back to Brooklyn.

JOEL  
I did not.

CATHY is transfixed by the sight of JOEL, and vice-a-versa.

CATHY  
I was so sure...

JOEL  
No... I never went back...

CATHY  
I thought I was never going  
to see you again... I...

JOEL  
I wasn't sure I'd be  
coming back here myself.  
I didn't make up my  
mind until just a few  
days ago.

CATHY starts crying uncontrollably.

JOEL  
What's the matter?

JOEL holds CATHY, who smiles through her tears. The whiskey bottle falls from JOEL's hand and lands without breaking by their feet.

35. The dining room in the farm mansion. JOEL, CATHY, HARRY, and MARY sit eating. Classical music plays in the background.

HARRY  
Well, here he is again!

JOEL  
Thank you.

HARRY  
So tell us all about  
Brooklyn.

35.(cont'd.)

CATHY

He didn't go there.  
Where did you go, Joel?

JOEL

Please, I really don't  
want to talk about myself.

CATHY

Come on, tell us where  
you were.

HARRY

Yes, Joel.

JOEL

You really want to know?  
Okay, then I'll tell you!

JOEL finishes his wine in one gulp.

JOEL

I've been a drunken bum!

CATHY

Seriously, Joel.

JOEL

I'm serious!

HARRY

We don't believe that!  
Do we, Ma?

JOEL

It's the truth. I travelled  
around begging for money  
and drinking. I don't care  
if anyone believes me!

JOEL smashes his wine glass against a wall and smiles at them.  
He picks up the wine bottle and drinks straight from it.

MARY

Oh my goodness.

HARRY

Mary, you better clean  
that up. Joel, so then  
life has been going  
downhill for you lately?

- 35.(cont'd.) MARY leaves the table to clean up the broken glass. JOEL drinks from the wine bottle a little longer and then slams it down.

JOEL

I've told you everything!

HARRY

Now Joel, it couldn't  
have been quite that  
simple.

JOEL is about to smash the wine bottle against the same wall, but seeing MARY crouched on the floor by it sweeping up the glass, he changes his mind and instead smashes the wine bottle against another wall. JOEL smiles at CATHY and HARRY and then leaves the room. HARRY looks sadly at CATHY, who meets his eyes and then looks down.

36. JOEL walks rapidly across the farm field in the dark, with his hands in his pockets and his head cast down.
37. CATHY is now alone in the dining room, her head still cast down. She suddenly leaves the room in a hurry.
38. CATHY opens the front door of the farm mansion and studies the field, but it is too dark to see anything.

CATHY

Joel!

JOEL

(Still walking) What?

39. CATHY runs across the field towards him, following the sound of his feet. She stops when she isn't too far from him.

CATHY

Joel?

JOEL

(Stopping) Yea?

CATHY runs over to JOEL. He starts walking again and she follows alongside him.

40. When they reach the beginning of the woods JOEL takes a whiskey bottle from behind a tree and then sits under the tree, facing the field and the mansion. He drinks the whiskey. CATHY sits down next to him. He offers her some, which she accepts.

JOEL

You're glad I'm  
back, aren't you?

JOEL and CATHY smile at each other for a while.



40.(cont'd.)

CATHY

But what's happened  
to you, Joel?

JOEL looks out across the field.

JOEL

Don't ask me a question  
like that.

JOEL looks at CATHY again.

JOEL

" You drove me away.

JOEL takes another swig of whiskey.

JOEL

You drove me away, because  
you couldn't trust me. You  
thought I would abandon you  
the way I abandoned Shirley  
in Brooklyn.

CATHY smiles. JOEL takes another swig of whiskey.

CATHY

You left out the baby.  
Didn't you also abandon  
a baby in Brooklyn?

JOEL looks out across the field again.

JOEL

You drove me away.

CATHY

If you left so that you  
wouldn't abandon me I don't  
see the difference. You  
abandoned me anyway, right?

JOEL

No I didn't. If I stayed  
longer, and then left, then  
maybe I would have been  
abandoning you.

CATHY

You did too abandon me.

JOEL

Why are you smiling?

40.(cont'd.)

CATHY

Okay, well I don't know  
how to tell you... that  
before you left you  
made me pregnant.

JOEL

(Smiling) I did not!  
What are you talking  
about?

CATHY kisses JOEL.

CATHY

You did abandon me.

JOEL kisses CATHY, lying her on the ground in the process.

41. THEME MUSIC. JOEL lies sleeping in Cathy's bed. CATHY, crouching  
alongside the bed naked, kisses JOEL's nose, waking him up.

42. The dining room in the farm mansion. The drapes are open, revealing  
that it is morning. JOEL, CATHY, HARRY, and MARY all sit eating  
breakfast wearing pajamas and bathrobes. Dramatic classical music  
plays in the background.

JOEL

How come Michael isn't  
dining with us this  
morning?

HARRY

Ah, so Cathy's told you  
about young Michael?  
And what a fine lad he  
is. Yes sir.

CATHY

You'll meet eachother  
at lunchtime. That's the  
way I've decided to do it.

JOEL

Why lunchtime?

JOEL takes a swig from his whiskey bottle, which is on the breakfast  
table.

JOEL

Yea, lunchtime's best.  
Well! I've come to a  
decision everybody, and  
I don't want any argueing.

42.(cont'd.)

HARRY

We've never argued,  
have we?

JOEL

Right. Well I've decided  
that Cathy and I should  
go to Brooklyn - just  
for a visit.

JOEL takes another swig of whiskey.

HARRY

Brooklyn?

MARY

Brooklyn?

CATHY

Why? I don't understand.

JOEL

(Pause) Cathy. How can  
we live here, happily  
ever after, with all  
that other stuff? (Pause)  
Not even knowing if my  
other kid's a boy or a  
girl or black or white  
or whatever. Think about  
that.

JOEL takes another swig of whiskey.

CATHY

I once wanted you to  
go to Brooklyn...

JOEL

Okay. It's like there's  
a secret in Brooklyn.  
See? We have to go there,  
and find out the secret.

HARRY

Have you thought this  
over carefully, Joel?

CATHY

(Pause) He's right. We  
have to go there, and  
find out what, uh,  
well, what happened.

42.(cont'd.)

JOEL  
To the baby.

CATHY  
...to the baby.

JOEL  
Right.

JOEL takes a very, very long swig of whiskey.

43. A subway train speeds along.

44. The wheels of the subway train, seen close up. Their sound is extremely loud.

45. The lavish estate where previously a limosine delivered Edward and Barbara.

46. Inside a subway car sit JOEL and CATHY, along with numerous nondescript passengers. JOEL seems oblivious to his surroundings, while CATHY seems more alert. CATHY turns to JOEL.

CATHY  
(Pause) Are we just  
going to say hello  
and then leave?

JOEL doesn't answer.

47. JOEL and CATHY climb several flights of stairs in a rundown apartment building. They come to a door and JOEL knocks on it.

MRS. WILLIAMS(v.o.)(middle-aged black woman)  
Yes, who is it?

JOEL  
Is Shirley there?

MRS. WILLIAMS  
(Pause) Go away.

JOEL  
I came to see Shirley.  
Open the door.

MRS. WILLIAMS  
Go away! (Pause)  
Shirley died. She  
died eight years ago.

JOEL  
This is Joel! Now open  
the Goddamn door!



47.(cont'd.)

MRS. WILLIAMS  
Joel, she died while  
she was giving birth...

JOEL  
No!!

JOEL and CATHY look at eachother. There is a long pause.

JOEL  
(Feebly) What happened  
to the baby?

MRS. WILLIAMS  
(Pleading) Go away!

JOEL  
Mrs. Williams, just tell me...

MRS. WILLIAMS  
The baby isn't here.

JOEL  
Do you know where-

MRS. WILLIAMS  
No. Now please go away,  
Joel.

JOEL and CATHY wait for a few moments and then leave, CATHY initiating it. Both are stunned, particularly JOEL.

48. The wheels of a subway train seen close up again, and their sound is again extremely loud.

49. JOEL and CATHY are climbing several flights of stairs in another, less rundown apartment building.

JOEL  
Well, here goes. I sure  
didn't think I would be  
coming back here.

CATHY  
They'll be glad to  
see you.

JOEL  
Yea, sure.

They climb the rest of the stairs in silence. They come to a door and JOEL rings the bell.

49.(cont'd.)

ANNA  
Who is it?

JOEL  
Joel.

ANNA  
(Unlocking the door)  
You go away for eight  
years and all of a  
sudden - bang, you  
return.

ANNA opens the door and JOEL and CATHY walk in unceremoniously.

ANNA  
Max, Joel's here...  
He came back.

JOEL leads CATHY to the living room, where they sit down. ANNA follows them and stands staring at them.

ANNA  
And who is this?

JOEL  
Her name is Cathy.

ANNA  
(Pause) How do you do.

CATHY  
How do you do.

JOEL  
(Pause) She's not Jewish.

ANNA  
Well obviously she's  
not Jewish.

ANNA stares a moment longer and then goes to the bedroom and brings back MAX, dragging him by the arm. JOEL and CATHY are in rhythm with each other. ANNA and MAX are also in rhythm with each other but they are not in rhythm with JOEL and CATHY.

MAX  
What are you talking about?  
What are you talking about?

ANNA  
See for yourself.

49.(cont'd.)

MAX  
Oh yea, you're right.

JOEL  
This is Cathy. Cathy,  
my father.

MAX  
How do you do?

CATHY  
How do you do.

After a pregnant pause, ANNA goes to the kitchen and MAX turns on the television, very loud, and then sits down and watches it.

50. JOEL, CATHY, ANNA, and MAX are eating dinner.

MAX  
Aren't you the one  
who called here eight  
years ago?

CATHY  
Yes, that's right.

ANNA  
What's this? She called?

MAX  
She wanted to give me  
Joel's address. And  
I hung up on her. Well,  
Cathy, eight years ago  
Joel was very unpopular  
around here.

JOEL  
Oh? You mean I'm not  
unpopular anymore?

ANNA  
You're still unpopular.

MAX  
Now be fair, Anna. It's  
been eight years and no  
one's mad at him anymore.

JOEL  
(Unenthusiastically)  
That's certainly nice  
to know.

50.(cont'd.) They eat in silence for a short while.

JOEL

The reason Cathy and I came back is that we want to find my uh, my child. You know, the one I had with Shirley?

ANNA

There's others?

JOEL

(Pause) One other. Me and Cathy...

ANNA

Mazeltov.

MAX

Mazeltov.

JOEL

A boy. So, if you people could tell us where we might find him, and then we can be on our way.

ANNA

And not even stay for dessert?

JOEL

Oh sure, we'll stay for dessert.

ANNA

Well we don't know anyway. Absolutely no idea. So you don't have to stay for dessert!

ANNA starts clearing the table.

MAX

They're staying for dessert!

ANNA

Alright, alright!

ANNA continues clearing the table.



51. JOEL and CATHY walk briskly down a corridor in the Atboro Memorial Hospital. Both are formally dressed.

JOEL

I think it'll be  
best if I handle  
this alone.

CATHY

What's the difference?

JOEL

Just let me handle  
it by myself.

CATHY

Alright! But the records  
are legally sealed  
anyway. You won't get  
your hands on them. We  
should go back to the  
farm and forget about  
the whole thing. There's  
no way they're going to  
let us find out who  
adopted your kid.

JOEL

Don't be so sure.

They come to the door of the office of the hospital social worker, Miss Barnes. CATHY sits in a chair outside the office. JOEL straightens his tie and touches his hair.

JOEL

Do I look okay?

CATHY

(Smiling) You look  
terrific.

JOEL kisses CATHY passionately and then knocks on the office door. CATHY watches him with a mixture of surprise and delight. JOEL takes a fifth of whiskey from inside his jacket, has a swig, and then returns it inside the jacket.

MISS BARNES(v.o.)

Come in.

52. JOEL stands on the other side of the door of the office with his hand on the doorknob, about to leave the office. His hair is now dishevelled and his tie is loose. He faces the other side of the room.

52.(cont'd.)

JOEL

Thank you very much.

MISS BARNES(v.o.)

(Sexily) Thank you.

JOEL gazes at the other side of the room a moment longer and then leaves the office.

53. JOEL walks briskly back to the corridor the way he came, fixing his tie and touching his hair into place.

JOEL

(Without stopping or looking at CATHY)

Come on.

CATHY stands up and walks alongside JOEL. JOEL suddenly smiles.

JOEL

I got it.

CATHY

What? She gave you the address?

JOEL

Well, she gave me the adoption agency to go to.

CATHY

(Smiling) But it's against the law! Why'd she do it?

54. MISS BARNES, an overweight, thirty year old woman, lies on a couch in her office with her blouse completely unbuttoned. She is smiling dreamily.

JOEL(v.o.)

Let's just say I know how to be persuasive.

55. A subway train speeds along.

56. JOEL and CATHY walk briskly down a corridor in The Lawnview Adoption Agency. JOEL is smiling, touching his hair and adjusting his tie again.

CATHY

I suppose you'll want to handle this one alone also.

56.(cont'd.) CATHY looks at JOEL curiously. JOEL just keeps smiling.

57. THEME MUSIC. A taxi takes JOEL and CATHY through the suburban town Edward and Barbara were previously seen going through in a limosine. JOEL and CATHY are still dressed formally. In the taxi they are having a very merry time, drinking and spilling whiskey, laughing, poking, hugging, and kissing each other, making broad gestures with their hands and arms when they speak, and generally carrying on. The taxi delivers them to Edward and Barbara's lavish estate and waits. JOEL and CATHY go to the front door of the very expensive mansion, which is much more expensive than Harry's very expensive farm mansion. JOEL and CATHY are now slightly serious, though still in good spirits.

58. THEME MUSIC. JOEL rings the doorbell. A stone faced BUTLER answers the door. JOEL launches into a long-winded explanation. The BUTLER's stone face becomes greatly surprised and anxious. The BUTLER shows JOEL and CATHY to a sofa in the living room, then leaves them.

59. THEME MUSIC. The BUTLER climbs a staircase, comes to a door, knocks on it, and enters the room, closing the door behind him. A few moments later BARBARA rushes from the room with her heart pounding, followed closely by the BUTLER. BARBARA descends the stairs but before entering the living room she forces herself to a stop, catches her breath and touches her hair. Then she turns to the BUTLER, her heart still pounding. THEME MUSIC stops.

BARBARA

It won't be necessary  
for you to make  
introductions, but could  
you go fetch a bottle  
of, uh, red Burgundy  
please?

BARBARA forces a smile, searching the BUTLER's face.

BUTLER

Yes M'am. Would you like  
me to bring it out right  
away?

BARBARA

(Pause) No. Wait ten  
minutes first. Bring  
it out in ten minutes.

BUTLER

Yes M'am.

BARBARA turns from the BUTLER and walks into the living room.

60. When BARBARA enters the living room JOEL and CATHY stand up.

BARBARA

Please don't bother.

BARBARA seats herself in a chair facing the sofa, and JOEL and CATHY sit back down.

JOEL

I came to see my son,  
Edward. I'm his real  
father.

BARBARA

Yes, my butler told me.

JOEL

I expect that he won't  
be returning from school  
for another hour, but I  
felt it best to speak  
with you beforehand.

BARBARA

That was thoughtful of  
you. But explain to me  
why you wish to see him?

JOEL

I just want to see him.  
That is, to meet him as  
one person makes the  
acquaintance of another.  
He's my son!

BARBARA

Yes, you want to meet him.  
And how did you learn  
where to find him?

JOEL

You mean the records being  
legally sealed.

BARBARA

Yes. Well but it doesn't  
matter. You're here. (Pause)  
I'm afraid I don't  
understand. You say you are  
Edward's real father and  
you simply came to shake  
his hand.

60.(cont'd.)

JOEL

Yes. (Pause) Ha-Ha! Yes, well I want him to be able to say he has, "seen his real father." I don't know. I guess I want to be able to say I've seen my son.

BARBARA

You don't even know why you came!

JOEL

I can't put it into words.

BARBARA

Do you have any idea what affect this might have? Okay, let me explain something to you. Edward's father, my husband, died very recently.

JOEL

We're sorry to hear that.

BARBARA

What you say does not matter. You're sorry, okay, thank you. But I am not telling you for you to say, "I am sorry." Edward's father died! It has turned him into a cold, heartless child! I want you to leave! Please! If you are here when he gets home... Please leave!

BARBARA stands up.

JOEL

Just calm down.

BARBARA

Did you hear me? Edward is a cold, heartless child!

JOEL

Fine. So I should leave now because I found out my son is being raised by someone who thinks he is cold and heartless.

60.(cont'd.) BARBARA hesitates a moment and then sits back down.

BARBARA

I'm not telling you  
my opinion. Everyone  
sees it. He loved my  
husband too much. Now  
that my husband is gone,  
Edward has changed.  
We've all changed. But  
Edward... it is very,  
very sad...

JOEL

I just want to meet him.

BARBARA

In school... he gets into  
trouble now. He fights  
all the time. There is  
one boy there, a nigger.  
Edward is always getting  
into fights with him.  
Before...

JOEL

What did you say? He's  
always getting into  
fights with a nigger?

BARBARA

Yes. At first everyone  
thought it was the nigger's  
fault, we all know about  
niggers always creating  
trouble. But no. It is  
Edward.

JOEL

How can you speak that  
way about black people??

BARBARA

I don't see what you mean?

JOEL

"Niggers always creating  
trouble"??

BARBARA

I don't need you to agree  
with my opinion of niggers.



60.(cont'd.)

JOEL

You're a racist!!

BARBARA

I'm a...? But I don't understand why suddenly this is important to you.

JOEL

(Very genuine curiosity)  
Tell me, Edward's skin?  
I mean, well how does it look??

BARBARA

I can't understand you!

JOEL

I've never seen his skin!  
Just tell me what color he is!

BARBARA

He's, he's white!! (To Cathy) What does he mean??

JOEL

He's white! You don't even know!

BARBARA

Please, I don't know what you're talking about, but I would like you to leave.

JOEL

(Pause) Edward's mother was black.

BARBARA

(Pause) This is nonsense.

JOEL

She was black.

BARBARA

That isn't possible.

JOEL

Yes.

CATHY

It's true.

60.(cont'd.)

JOEL

Sometimes, a white father  
and a black mother produce  
a white child.

BARBARA

I want you to leave.

JOEL

And you just hate niggers,  
don't you? Don't you! You  
can't even stand to look  
at them!

CATHY

Joel, we have to leave. Oh,  
look at her! She can't even  
bear the thought!

JOEL

From now on it'll be  
misery for you just  
looking at him.

BARBARA

No it won't...

JOEL

Yes it will! You know it will!

CATHY

She'll change.

JOEL

I know what a racist is! I  
was in love with her, I was  
glad when she got pregnant.  
But the racists wouldn't  
allow it! Racists! Like you!  
They hated Edward before he  
was born. They hated us! I  
was the only one who wanted  
him to be born!

CATHY

We have to leave.

BARBARA

This woman is right. You  
should not have told me.

JOEL

He's got to know what he is!

60.(cont'd.)

BARBARA

Okay... yes. But now leave...  
please...

CATHY

Let's go! Joel, we have to  
do what she wants us to do!  
Can't you see? This is not  
the time for Edward to meet  
his real father.

There is a long pause. JOEL suddenly leaps out of his chair and  
knocks BARBARA onto the floor. Then he leaves the mansion and  
goes to the taxi. CATHY helps BARBARA up and then joins JOEL in  
the taxi, which then drives off.

## Part 2: THE STORY OF EDWARD

61. The taxi leaves the estate far behind.

62. EDWARD, carrying two schoolbooks, slowly walks down a tree-lined  
dirt road and enters the estate and the mansion.

63. SEVEN YEARS LATER.....

64. EDWARD, now fifteen years old, is in his bedroom with LAURA, a  
pretty fifteen year old girl. They're watching a cartoon on a  
color T.V. set while sitting on the bed, leaning against the  
wall.

EDWARD

Ha-Ha-Ha! Isn't this  
great?

LAURA turns to EDWARD, who continues watching the T.V.

LAURA

I thought you wanted  
me to help you with  
your homework?

EDWARD

Come on! We can do the  
homework after the show,  
alright?

LAURA

You sound like you  
really want to!

EDWARD faces LAURA.